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LDF Issues Statement on Historic Georgia Runoff Election Results

In response to the Georgia runoff election results, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill released the following statement:

“LDF extends congratulations to Senator-elect Rev. Raphael Warnock on his historic election to the United States Senate. The election of the senior pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King, Jr. served as co-pastor from 1959 until his death in 1968 has historic significance for the state of Georgia and for this country. Senator-elect Warnock is the 11th African American to serve in the U.S. Senate and only the second Black person elected to the U.S. Senate from the South since Reconstruction.

“Over 100 years after the election of Senator M. Hoke Smith – who, as Governor, implemented the grandfather clause that disenfranchised most Black Georgians – and 50 years after the death of Richard Russell, the segregationist Georgia Senator who co-authored the Southern Manifesto, the state of Georgia has for the first time elected a Black man to the United States Senate.

“Turnout for last night’s runoff was higher than in previous runoff elections, especially among Black voters in urban and rural counties. This was due to the diligent and dedicated work of Black organizers – especially Black women – who worked to register voters, engaged in effective public information campaigns, and pushed back on attempts to suppress Black turnout. They should be congratulated for these efforts, as should Black voters across the state who turned out during the Early Voting period, and voted by mail and in-person on Election Day. Georgia has a long history of Black voter suppression and intimidation – tactics that were at play again in the November and runoff election. Despite these challenges, Black voters were not deterred and demonstrated resilience and determination in absentee voting, early voting and on election day.

“Additionally, if his apparent election is confirmed, Jon Ossoff would become the first Jewish senator elected from the state of Georgia. His election is also historically significant. A little over a hundred years ago, a white mob publicly lynched a Jewish man, Leo Frank, in Marietta, Georgia, in one of the most notorious lynchings in that state.

“Although we recognize the historic significance of this election, we also recognize the need to intensify our fight against voter suppression in Georgia and other states. LDF will continue our non-partisan work to ensure full and unencumbered access to voting for Black people.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).